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Dear Provider:

The Department of Mental Health is dedicated to assuring that consumers are safe, respected, treated fairly, and receiving appropriate services and supports. Obtaining employee background screenings is a critical consumer safety requirement. This letter serves as a reminder to providers of background screening requirements. To assist in compliance activities, the attached information provides a detailed review of the background screening requirements.

Since August 15, 2006, it has been expected that all staff members in positions that have contact with consumers, or in some cases all positions, including contract employees, students and volunteers, have the required background screenings, regardless of their hire date. This includes all employees who were hired prior to the date when background screenings became mandatory as well as those screened as part of the hiring process. We recommend you review your current procedures for employee background screenings and ensure that your facility or program is in compliance with this requirement.

Additionally, during the course of annual reviews, certification staff members will continue to ensure that background screenings are being completed on appropriate agency personnel. This monitoring will include a review of all employees hired since the last review and a Department selected sample of employees working at the agency longer than one year. Attached please find information about the requirements for background screenings and various avenues that may be used to obtain the results.

Our community providers are one of our greatest assets in ensuring the care and safety of those we serve. We appreciate your dedication and commitment to the individuals we serve and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynn Carter".

Lynn Carter, MSW, LCSW
Deputy Director
Department of Mental Health